AMENDMENTS

In the Claims:

Please CANCEL claims 1-5.

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7. (Twice Amended) A method for protecting from peptidase degradation a therapeutic peptide sensitive to such peptidase degradation *in vivo*, said peptide comprising between 3 and 50 amino acids and having a carboxy terminus and an amino terminus and a carboxy terminal amino acid and an amino terminal amino acid, comprising:

(a) modifying said peptide by coupling a reactive group to the carboxy terminal amino acid, to the amino terminal amino acid, or to an amino acid located between the amino terminal amino acid and the carboxy terminal amino acid; and

(b) forming a covalent bond between said reactive group and a reactive functionality on a blood component to form a peptide-blood component conjugate, thereby protecting said peptide from peptidase degradation.

8. (Reiterated) A method according to claim 7, wherein the peptide-blood component conjugate is formed *in vivo*.

9. (Reiterated) A method according to claim 7, wherein the peptide-blood component conjugate is formed *ex vivo*.

11. (Reiterated) A method according to claim 7, wherein said reactive group comprises a maleimide group.

12. (Reiterated) A method according to claim 7, wherein said reactive group is coupled to said peptide via a lysine and/or a linking group.

13. (Reiterated) A method according to claim 7, wherein said blood component is albumin.

14. (Reiterated) A method according to claim 7, wherein one or more of said amino acids is synthetic.

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15. (Twice Amended) A method for protecting from peptidase degradation a therapeutic peptide sensitive to such peptidase degradation *in vivo*, said peptide comprising between 3 and 50 amino acids and having a therapeutically active region of amino acids and a less therapeutically active region of amino acids, comprising:

(a) identifying said therapeutically active region of amino acids;

(b) modifying said peptide at an amino acid included in said less therapeutically active region by coupling thereto a reactive group to said amino acid to form a modified peptide, such that said modified peptide has therapeutic activity; and

(c) forming a covalent bond between said reactive group and a reactive functionality on a blood component to form a peptide-blood component conjugate, thereby protecting said peptide from peptidase activity.

16. (Reiterated) A method according to claim 15, wherein the peptide-blood component conjugate is formed *in vivo*.

17. (Reiterated) A method according to claim 15, wherein the peptide-blood component conjugate is formed *ex vivo*.

21. (Reiterated) A method according to claim 15, wherein said peptide has a carboxy terminus, an amino terminus, a carboxy terminal amino acid and an amino terminal amino acid, and wherein step (b) further comprises:

(a) if said less therapeutically active region is located at the carboxy terminus of said peptide, then modifying said peptide at the carboxy terminal amino acid of said peptide; or

(b) if said less therapeutically active region is located at the amino terminus of said peptide, then modifying said peptide at the amino terminal amino acid of said peptide; or (c) if said less therapeutically active region is located at neither the amino terminus nor the carboxy terminus of said peptide, then modifying said peptide at an amino acid located between the carboxy terminus and the amino terminus.

22. (Reiterated) A method according to claim 15, wherein said reactive group is a maleimide group.

23. (Reiterated) A method according to claim 15, wherein said reactive group is coupled to said peptide via a linking group.

24. (Reiterated) A method according to claim 15, wherein said blood component is albumin.

25. (Reiterated) A method according to claim 15, wherein one or more of said amino acids is synthetic.

REMARKS

Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 7 and 15 have been amended. Claims 1-5 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 7-9, 11-17, and 21-25 are pending.